

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, March 1. 1711.

I Am for doing by the King of *France* in his Liberty of Trade, as I did by King *James* in his Liberty of Conscience; King *James* by his Arbitrary Power, and upon Destructive Principles, Publish'd Liberty of Conscience to the *Dissenters*.

That he design'd in it Politickly to divide them from the Church, that one being weaken'd, both might be destroy'd, was too plain; and so far was that Design discover'd, that it was, but a few who were so blind as not to see it—Well, What was the proper Work of a *Dissenter* at that Time?—It was plain, his Liberty was his Advantage

as well as his Right.—Then said I, I'll accept of the Liberty, and yet avoid the *Saare*, and this is our Case now.

What is it to me, upon what View the King of *France* opens the Door of Trade to the *English*?—We are upon the Square with him still, we fight him still, and fight him we must; but if we can get Money by him, Why should we refuse that?—Suppose he has forty Designs on Foot in it, to Mischief us; if we can get Money by him, we shall be in the better Condition to Disappoint those Designs. Let the *Jacobites* think it may introduce a Correspondence, make us Familiar, lessen the Antipathies
of

of the Nations, and what they please— The Question is, *Will the Trade be to our Advantage?* — If it will, let us not refuse the Advantage, for we have need enough of it every Way, to Resist and Struggle with the *French Power* — If we can get Money by them, it will help us to fight with them, it will make the War less a Burthen to us, and help us to carry it on with the more Chearfulness; by all means let us make the best of them we can.

The King of *France* knows very well, the Breach of this Trade is a Loss to the *Dutch*, yet he must have a Trade too somewhere; therefore I am of Opinion, his own Interest moves him to open our Way, if we think fit; and this seems to me a more probable Reason, why that Liberty is offer'd to the *English* than the other — But neither is this a Reason why we should refuse it.

It is evident, Prohibition of Trade is only Transposing Trade, and resolving to Trade at second and third Hand, when we might Trade at first Hand — For both we and the *Dutch* must, and always do Trade with *France*: When the *Dutch* Trade was open, and ours prohib'd, we Traded through their Hands; if theirs is prohibit and ours open, they will Trade through our Hands; if both are prohibited, as once they were, and the *Portuguese* were Neuters, we both Traded through their Hands; after the *Portuguese* came into the War, the *Danes* and *Swedes* were the People, but still we Traded to *France*, and do so still; so that the Prohibition serves only to make our Trade more difficult and less Profitable; and we take a great deal of Pains to perplex our Trade, and rob our selves of the just Advantages of General Commerce.

When in the manner as above, the *Portuguese* were the Medium of this Trade, the *Dutch* and *English* having excluded themselves by Prohibitions, What was the Consequence? It Enrich'd the *Portuguese*; when the *Portuguese* came into the War, it Enrich'd the *Danes* and the *Swedes*; when the *Dutch* saw this, they open'd the Door, and came in themselves, and then it Enrich'd them — The King of *France* see-

ing his Enemies, the *Dutch*, thrive so much by his Commerce, has shut them out, and now it lies open to us — Pray let any Man Answer me these two Questions, if he can.

1. If the *Portuguese*, if the *Danes* and *Swedes*, if the *Dutch* grew Rich by the *French Trade*, Why should not we?
2. If we can visibly Enrich our selves by the Trade with *France*, Why should we not do it?

Here, as the Nature of a Question requires, I pause a little, as the Parson does in the Office of Matrimony, after he asks if any one knows any Lawful Impediment, why the Couple before them may not be join'd together — To see if any Man will forbid the Banns — And I shall in my next, proceed to Examine,

1. The former State of our Trade to *France*.
2. The present State of it, if it were allow'd.

And shall therein prove, that tho' it was formerly a Pernicious Destructive Trade to us, Ruinous to our People, and Impoverishing to us, as to Money — Yet that now it is quite otherwise, and may be carried on to our great Advantage; that the Ballance will run on our Side to a very great Summ Yearly; and I shall also explain to you the Reason of the Difference, and how it comes to pass.

While I make this Interval, I go on to speak to the second Head I propos'd, viz. Of the Laws about Exclusive Trade — And here I unwarily promis'd to touch the long debated Case of the Trade to *Africa*.

Indeed I had then only design'd to Discourse a little of the Reason, Necessity, and Usefulness of Exclusive Trade; in what Cases those Priviledges have been granted, upon what Ground, and with what Conditions, and when such Priviledges are fit

to be granted, and when not ; not thinking at all, that the Strife between our *African* Company and separate Traders, would come upon the Stage again—— It may be true, that at the distance I now write, I cannot foretell what new Allegations either Side may start up, like Princes at War, who make every Year new Fortifications and new Engines of Offence against one another ; if any Thing worth Notice appears, I may speak to it as I go on.

But I freely own, that with my View merely to the Good of Trade in general, and tho' I do hear they are preparing to renew their Addresses or Application to the Parliament, (and at the Publication of this, one of the Petitions appears in the Votes ;) yet having Convers'd or Corresponded with neither Party, but entirely Neuter, and speaking my own Opinion, as I hope every Man may freely do, I am fully persuaded,

1. That the Trade to *Africa* can no Way be SECUR'D to this Nation, but in a Company with *Exclusive Privileges*.
2. That none ought to be Entrusted with that necessary Beneficial Trade, but such as can positively (not by Suppositions, Consequences, and Probabilities, only) *secure the Trade* to the Nation.

If the Separate Traders can come in to the last Number now, it must be by offering something they never offer'd yet, and I must say, all that I ever saw offer'd by those Gentlemen, in their former Proposals to the Parliament, seem'd to me, I ask their Pardon for my *Eye sight*, I say, seem'd to me, to look rather like a Design to dissolve the Company, than preserve the Settlement ; and their Schemes of future Trade, more like a Prospect of making *their Game* out of the Ruins of the Trade, than Engaging for, and securing to the Publick, the carrying on a Trade that we cannot live without ; if they think me too hard in this Censure, I shall give my Reasons on which I

ground it, when I come to *Examine Particulars*.

Wherefore since the Company and Separate Traders are coming again, as I may say, before their Godfathers, and the Trade is to be adopted one Way or other, by the Nation ; I shall only Humbly recommend to our Sages, and to the Nation's Grand Counsel, that they will be pleas'd to Enquire, which of the two Contending Parties can preserve the Trade to the Nation, and give Security to do so, and which cannot ? And then I shall easily tell which they will Establish, and which Reject ; for the Question is short and direct, and the Separate Traders by shunning a direct Answer to it, have always betray'd the Weakness of their own Foundation.

I shall conclude with one plain, tho' I hope not disrespectful Inference here, which I submit to the House also——Whether, since the Determination of this Question is referr'd to the House, and they should make a wrong Choice ; should they dissolve those that can give Security, and Establish those that can not, and the Trade should die, we should not lose one of the most Essential, most Profitable, and most Improving Branches of the *English Trade* ? But I hope there will be no need to fear a Thing so fatal shall befall us now, whatever Danger there has been of it formerly ; Parliaments seldom give away the Nation's Advantages, the House of Commons are ever Thoughtful to preserve, not to destroy ; and really this seems a Time of Day above all other, when we should give away nothing that we can lawfully keep, we have spent so much, and have so little left us ; but of this hereafter.

Since then the Company has Petition'd, I shall wait with some Impatience to see the Crowd of Petitions, which, by Way of Clamour, will come in after ; for Noise has always some Effect, and is always thought most useful where Argument ceases ; and I make no doubt to find our Merchants Petitioning against Trade, Planters struggling to have their *Negroes* dear, Country Towns Petitioning against their

their Manufactures, Masters of Ships against the Encrease of Navigation, and the like, as it was before, and I doubt ever

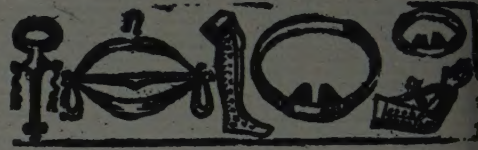
will be; but these Things are not strange in an Age so full of Contradictions as this is.

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Printed for and sold by John Baker at the Black-Boy in Peter-Nostr-Row. 1711.